DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 255 786 TM 850 244

AUTHOR Hawkins, Joseph A., Jr.
TITLE Follow-up Study of Special Education Graduates: Class of 1983.
INSTITUTION Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, Md. Dept. of Educational Accountability.
PUB DATE Sep 84
NOTE 37p.; Executive Summary printed on colored paper.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Disabilities; Employer Attitudes; *Graduates; Graduate Surveys; *Job Training; Parent Attitudes; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Secondary Education; *Special Programs; *Special Schools; Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Montgomery County Public Schools MD; Telephone Surveys

ABSTRACT

The Montgomery County Public Schools, (MCPS), Maryland, annually surveys its graduating classes to help determine whether MCPS adequately prepares its graduates. This is the first follow-up study of MCPS's 10 special education schools' graduates (class of 1983). It investigates: (1) postsecondary education and employment activities; (2) students' and/or parents' perceptions of program quality; (3) the effectiveness of these programs; and (4) current living arrangements for graduates. Telephone surveys were conducted with 92 (of 179) MCPS graduates, 48 parents, and 36 employers. Findings show that most graduates are either working in relatively low-skilled job categories or attending training institutions. However both parents and graduates at some schools felt MCPS could improve its job training programs. Employers are satisfied with the work of the graduates and rate their job performance very highly. The Appendix contains descriptions of the MCPS special education programs for mental retardation (Concord, Longview, and Stephen Knolls schools), multiple handicaps (Rock Terrance High School), emotional impairment (the Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents in Rockville, Bridge School, and Mark Twain School), hearing impaired (Rockville High School) orthopedically and other health impaired (Kennedy High School), and specific learning disability (Walter Johnson, Gaithersburg, and Kennedy High Schools). (BS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED256786

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

Follow-up Study of Special Education Graduates Class of 1983

September1984

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. Haynes
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Wilmer S. Cody
Superintendent of Schools

Prepared by the Department of Educational Accountability

TM850 244

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION GRADUATES

CLASS OF 1983

By

Joseph A. Hawkins, Jr.

Steven M. Frankel, Director
Department of Educational Accountability

Joy A. Frechtling, Director
Division of Instructional
Evaluation and Testing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION GRADUATES CLASS OF 1983

The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) conducts annual surveys of its high school graduating classes. These surveys gather information about graduates' opinions of the education provided by MCPS and their postsecondary educational and vocational experiences. In a general way, the findings from the surveys are used to determine if MCPS is adequately preparing its graduates for their futures as either college students or working adults. To date, however, the annual surveys of graduating classes have not included students who graduated from MCPS special education schools. The present study was initiated, therefore, to find out what happened to special education students who graduated in 1983.

The purpose of this study was to gather data on what special education graduates were doing and how they felt about their high school education nearly one year after graduation. Specific areas of investigation included:

- Postsecondary education and employment activities during the first year after graduation
- Students' and/or parents' perceptions of the quality of the special education schools' programs
- Students', parents', and employers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the special education schools' programs (e.g., how well a school's program prepared the student for work)
- Living arrangements for graduates the first year after graduation

The sample for this study was drawn from ten MCPS special education schools: Concord, Longview, Stephen Knolls, Rock Terrace, Mark Twain School, Bridge School, Gaithersburg Senior High School's Learning Center, Walter Johnson Senior High School's Learning Center, Rockville Senior High School's Auditory Program, and John Kennedy Senior High School's Orthopedic Program. Telephone surveys were conducted with 92 MCPS graduates, 48 parents of MCPS graduates, and 36 employers of MCPS graduates. All interviews were conducted between February 21 and March 16. Overall, it was possible to gather firsthand information on 73 percent of the 1982-83 special education graduates. The status of the remaining 27 percent of the 1982-83 graduates was not determined because of a variety of reasons (e.g., limitations related to handicaps, phone disconnected, moved away, no answer or wrong phone number, etc.).

FINDINGS

Specifically, the following findings should be noted about graduates who were interviewed:

- Forty-seven percent of the special education graduates from the class of 1983 are working either on a full- or part-time basis, 25 percent are working either on a full- or part-time basis and receiving some kind of postsecondary education or training either on a full- or part-time basis, 12 percent are receiving some kind of postsecondary education or training, exclusively, on either a full- or part-time basis, 13 percent of the graduates are unemployed, and 3 percent are institutionalized.

- Graduates who are working are employed in relatively low-skilled job categories. Thirty-five percent of these graduates are employed in clerical jobs, typically in offices or retail stores, 23 percent are employed in food service jobs, typically in fast food restaurants; and 19 percent are employed as maintenance or building services workers.

- Typically graduates from Mark Twain and the Secondary Learning Centers are receiving postsecondary training at Montgomery College. These graduates are majoring in a variety of areas, such as Dental Lab Technology and Hospitality Management. Graduates from schools such as Longview and Rock Terrace are receiving receiving postsecondary training from a variety of sources, such as The Center for the Handicapped, Montgomery County Association of Retarded Citizens, and Maryland Rehabilitation Center.

- The employers seem to be quite satisfied with MCPS graduates as employees. Nearly 80 percent of the employers said they were either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the graduate as an employee. Sixty-two percent of the employers stated that the graduate would be working at his/her company or organization a year from now, and more than half of the employers said that there is room for the graduate to be promoted.

- Overall, nearly 80 percent of the graduates that were contacted were found to be living at home with their parents.

- Overall, parents of special education graduates from schools such as Longview and Rock Terrace feel that MCPS best prepared their child for socializing and interacting with other people. In the area of the child's school needing improvement, parents mentioned improving the school's job training program more than any other aspect.

- Gradutes from Mark Twain and the Secondary Learning Centers are generally pleased with their preparation in basic education skills; however, the majority of these graduates do not feel that their school adequately prepared them for a specific job.

SUMMARY

The findings from this first follow-up study of graduates from MCPS senior high school level special education schools show that most graduates are either working or attending some type of postsecondary training institution. Parents of graduates from some MCPS special education schools, however, are of the opinion that MCPS could do much more to improve its job training programs. Employers of graduates are generally quite pleased and satisfied with the work of the graduates and rate their performance on the job very high.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	v
Introduction and Purpose	1
The Respondent Sample	2
Findings	4
Current Status of 1982-83 Graduates	4
Job Held by Graduates	6
Employers Ratings of the Job Performance of Graduates	8
Postsecondary Training	10
Living Arrangements	10
Future Plans	11
School Quality and Effectiveness	12
Education Preparation	12
Helpful Aspects and Aspects Needing Improvements	17
Appendix	19

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Department of Educational Accountability extends its thanks to the following individuals and groups who made contributions to this study;

The principals, directors, and staff of the special education schools and programs who willingly provided us with all the information we needed to make this study.

June Bogushefsky who diligently gathered the background information on the 1983 special education graduates from their school records.

Leslie Cherkis and Rita Amy Morris who did an outstanding job completing the graduate, parent, and employer telephone interviews. An additional thank you is in order for Rita Amy Morris for her assistance in coding and analyzing the interview data.

FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION GRADUATES
CLASS OF 1983

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Approximately 12 percent of the students who are being educated in the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) have some type of handicapping condition and are being served in special education programs. Historically, many of the special education programs in MCPS have been designed to be a temporary assignment until the student is able to be mainstreamed into a regular school; however, it has become apparent over the years that the needs of some students are too great to expect them to return to a regular school. There are many students who attend only special schools for all or most of their school years. In fact, many students attending special schools at the senior high level "graduate" from them.

MCPS conducts annual surveys of its high school graduating classes. These surveys gather information about graduates' opinions of the education provided by MCPS and their postsecondary educational and vocational experiences. In a general way, the findings from the surveys are used to determine if MPCS is adequately preparing its graduates for their futures as either college students or working adults. To date, however, the annual surveys of graduating classes have not included students who graduated from MCPS special education schools. The present study was intitiated, therefore, to find out what happened to special education students who graduated from MCPS in 1983.

The purpose of this study was to gather data on what special education graduates were doing and how they felt about their high school education nearly one year after graduation. Specific areas of investigation included:

- Postsecondary education and employment activities during the first year after graduation
- Students' and/or parents' perceptions of the quality of the special education schools' programs
- Students', parents', and employers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the special education schools' programs (e.g., how well a school's program prepared the student for work)
- Living arrangements for graduates the first year after graduation

THE RESPONDENT SAMPLE

The sample was drawn from ten special education schools (see the Appendix for a description of each). The schools, grouped by handicap, were the following:

Mentally Retarded	Concord
	Longview
	Stephen Knolls
Multihandicapped	Rock Terrace
Emotionally Disabled	Mark Twain
	Bridge School
Learning Disabled	Gaithersburg Senior High School
	Walter Johnson Senior High School
Hearing Disabled	Rockville Senior High School
Orthopedically Disabled	John Kennedy Senior High School

Telephone surveys were conducted with 92 MCPS graduates, 48 parents of MCPS graduates, and 3% employers of MCPS graduates. Graduates from the ten special education schools were interviewed if they were intellectually and physically capable of responding to the questions. If the graduate could not be interviewed, the parent or guardian of the graduate was interviewed. If students were employed or had been employed since graduation and if they or their parents gave permission for the employer to be contacted, the graduate's job supervisor was interviewed. All interviews were conducted between February 21 and March 16.

Exhibit 1 shows the exact number of graduates, parents, and employers interviewed. Exhibit 1 also shows the number of 1982-83 graduates for each school. In most situations it was possible to interview a majority of the graduates from each of ten special schools. However, it was not possible to interview as many employers. In fact, less than a majority (39 percent) of the graduates working gave permission to contact their employers for an interview.

EXHIBIT 1

Number of Persons Interviewed by School

School	Handicapping Condition	Number of Graduates	Number of Persons Interviewed			
			Student	Parent	Employer	Total
Concord	Mentally retarded	4	-	3	-	3
Longview	Mentally retarded	10	-	9	1	10
Stephen Knolls	Mentally retarded	9	-	6	3	9
Rock Terrace	Multihandicapped*	22	12	16	8	36
Bridge	Emotionally impaired	3	-	3	-	3
Mark Twain	Emotionally impaired	50	33	-	11	44
W. J. LCtr.**	Learning disabled	42	31	-	6	37
Gaithersburg LCtr.	Learning disabled	23	16	-	5	21
Rockville (Deaf)	Hearing impaired	10	-	9	1	10
Kennedy (Physical)	Orthopedically impaired	6	-	2	1	3
Totals		179	92	48	36	176

*Multihandicaps are mental retardation, emotional impairment, and orthopedic impairment.

**LCtr., Learning Center.

FINDINGS

This section of the report is divided into two parts. Part one briefly summarizes the current status of 1982-83 special education graduates, highlighting four areas: employment status, postsecondary training and education opportunities, living arrangements, and future plans as seen by the graduate or parent. The discussion of employment status includes a brief summary of the findings from the employer interviews. Part two summarizes interview data by school, highlighting student and parent perception of the quality and effectiveness of the graduate's senior high school level program.

CURRENT STATUS OF 1982-83 GRADUATES

During the 1982-83 school year, 175 students graduated from the ten special education schools in the study's sample. Through telephone interviews, it was possible to gather firsthand information on 128 students or 73 percent of the 1982-83 special education graduates. The exact status of the remaining 47 students (27 percent of the 1982-83 special education graduates) was not determined because some of the graduates had moved out of state and could not be traced to new locations. Others were simply impossible to interview for a variety of reasons (e.g., personal limitations related to the graduates handicapping condition, telephone disconnected, no answer or wrong telephone number, etc.).

Exhibit 2 summarizes the current status of those graduates interviewed into the following five categories:

1. Graduates who are currently employed either on a full- or part-time basis

2. Graduates who are currently receiving some kind of postsecondary education on either a full- or part-time basis. The education includes attending college, trade or business school, and job training programs sponsored by the county or the state

3. Graduates who are currently employed either on a full- or part-time basis and are also receiving some kind of postsecondary education on either a full- or part-time basis

4. Graduates who are either institutionalized (e.g., in Great Oaks) or unemployed (have not sought employment since graduation)

5. Graduates whose current status could not be determined (e.g., graduates who moved away, graduates with wrong phone numbers)

EXHIBIT 2

Current Status of 1982-83 Special Education Graduates by School

School	No. of Graduates Interviewed	Current Status of Graduate				
		Employed*	Postsecondary Training**	Employed & Postsecondary Training	Unemployed	Institutionalized
Concord	3	-	-	-	3 (100)	-
Longview	9	-	2 (22)	3 (33)	-	4 (45)
Stephen Knolls	6	-	2 (33)	2 (33)	2 (33)	-
Rock Terrace	16	6 (37)	3 (19)	5 (31)	2 (13)	-
Mark Twain	33	23 (70)	2 (6)	6 (18)	2 (6)	-
Bridge	3	-	-	-	3 (100)	-
WJ LCtr.	31	15 (48)	4 (13)	9 (29)	3 (10)	-
Gaithersburg LCtr.	16	11 (69)	-	5 (31)	-	-
Rockville (Deaf)	9	4 (45)	2 (22)	1 (11)	2 (22)	-
JFK (Orthopedic)	2	1 (50)	-	1 (50)	-	-
Totals	128	60 (47)	15 (12)	32 (25)	17 (13)	4 (3)

NOTE: Numbers in parentheses are percentages and add to 100 across each school row.

*Employed includes students in the military.

**Postsecondary training includes attending college, trade, or business school, and job training programs sponsored by the county (Montgomery) or state (Maryland).

The interview data show that:

- Sixty (47 percent) graduates are currently working either on a full- or part-time basis. The majority (63 percent) of students who are working reported that they work at least 32 hours a week.

- Thirty-two (25 percent) graduates are working either on a full- or part-time basis and receiving some kind of postsecondary education or training either on a full- or part-time basis.

- Fifteen (12 percent) graduates are receiving some kind of postsecondary education or training, exclusively, either on a full- or part-time basis.

- Seventeen (13 percent) graduates are unemployed. Some of the unemployed graduates said that they had not applied for work since graduation.

- Four (3 percent) graduates are institutionalized at Great Oaks. These graduates (those with severe physical or mental limitations) may never be capable of holding a job, an opinion expressed by a number of social workers interviewed at Great Oaks.

- Data on individual special education schools show that 64 percent of the graduates from Rock Terrace High School, 62 percent of the graduates from Mark Twain, 67 percent of the graduates from the Walter Johnson Learning Center, 71 percent of the graduates from the Gaithersburg Learning Center, and 70 percent of the graduates from the Auditory Program are either employed on a full- or part-time basis and/or are receiving some kind of postsecondary education/training.

Jobs Held by Graduates

Exhibit 3 summarizes the type of jobs special education graduates are currently holding as reported by the graduate or parent/guardian. The data show that employment opportunities for graduates are limited to a few low-skilled job categories. Specifically, the data show that:

- Thirty-five percent of the graduates are employed in clerical jobs, typically in offices or retail stores.

- Twenty-three percent of the graduates are employed in food services jobs, typically in fast food restaurants.

- Nineteen percent of the graduates are employed as maintenance or building services workers.

EXHIBIT 3

Types of Jobs Held by Special Education Graduates

Type of Job	School								Total	
	Rockville Auditory	Kennedy Orthopedic	Stephen Knolls	Rock Terrace	Longview	Mark Twain	Walter Johnson LC	Gaithersburg LC	N	%
Cashier						1	3	1	5	(7)
Child Care				3			1	1	5	(7)
Clerical	3	1	1	2	3	10	3	1	24	(35)
Food Services	2			3		4	2	5	16	(23)
Internship*	1								1	(1)
Keypunch Operator		1							1	(1)
Machinist							2		2	(3)
Maintenance Worker			1	7	1	3	1		13	(19)
Receptionist							2		2	(3)
Total	6	2	2	15	4	18	14	8	69	(100)

*Nonpaying internship at the Montgomery County Probation Court.

Employers Ratings of the Job Performance of Graduates

Since graduating from an MCPS school, 92 special education graduates have been employed either on a full- or part-time basis in 1982-83. Thirty-nine percent of the employed graduates gave permission to have their employer (or supervisor) contacted to ask questions about how the graduate was performing on the job. The employer interview focused on such issues as the graduate's job punctuality and attendance, the graduate's most and least desirable qualities as they relate to the job, and the employer's satisfaction with the graduate as an employee.

The data from the employer are extremely interesting and informative. It is important to point out that these data, however, have several limitations. First, the employer data represent the opinions of employers toward a minority of the 1982-83 special education graduates who are employed. The opinions of employers summarized here could very likely have been different if more employers had been contacted. Secondly, it is important to keep in mind that the majority of students indicated that they did not want their employer contacted. This could mean that many graduates are not doing well on the job and were apprehensive about their employer reporting such. On the other hand, the student's refusal to allow his/her employer to be contacted could simply mean that many graduates did not wish for his/her privacy to be invaded. Finally, since so few employers were interviewed, it is not possible to use the data to compare how graduates from different schools are doing.

Employers were asked to rate graduates' job performance in eight different areas: job punctuality, job attendance, employer/employee relationships, employee/coworker relationships, relations with the public, quality of work done, quantity of work done, and willingness to learn and improve work. Data summarized in Exhibit 4 show that employers rate MCPS graduates' job performance very high overall. For example, 76 percent of the employers rated job attendance by graduates as "good." Fifty-seven percent of the employers rated the graduate's willingness to learn and improve his/her job performance as "good," and twenty-two percent rated willingness to learn and improve as "average." Very few employers rated any aspect of the graduates' job performance as "poor" or "fair." The only area with a sizable proportion of employers rating graduates as "poor" or "fair" was the quantity of work done. Thirty-seven percent of the employers rated the quantity of work as "poor" or "fair."

Employers were asked to identify the most desirable qualities (the best qualities, traits, or strengths) and the least desirable qualities (the worst qualities, traits, or weaknesses) of their employees. The following qualities were identified as the most desirable: good attitude (24 percent of the employers mentioned this quality); reliable/dependable (18 percent); take-charge individual (18 percent); and cooperative (12 percent). The following qualities were identified as the least desirable: lacks motivation (43 percent); needs close supervision (21 percent); immaturity (14 percent); poor communication skills (14 percent); and slow (11 percent).

EXHIBIT 4

Job Performance Rated by Employers

	% of Employers Rating Job Performance As:			
Job Area Rate	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Punctuality	68%	16%	5%	3%
Attendance	76	14	8	0
Relations with Employer	70	22	5	0
Relations with Coworkers	65	19	8	3
Relations with Public	46	24	8	0
Quality of Work Done	41	41	14	0
Quantity of Work Done	32	35	22	5
Willingness to Learn/Improve	57	22	14	5

Note: Row percentages do not add to 100 because of nonresponses. Percentages are based on the responses of 37 employers.

More than half the employers interviewed said that the MCPS special education graduate did not have all the job-related skills necessary to perform well on the job. It is important to note here that despite the lack of job-related skills some graduates were hired on a trial basis. Employers identified the following skills as those missing when the graduate was hired: common sense, specific mechnical ability or skills, ability to follow directions, and math skills. Most (78 percent) employers, however, said they did not think the missing skills could have been acquired prior to employment. The employers (22 percent) who felt that graduates could have acquired the proper job skills prior to employment suggest that the skills could have been obtained through MCPS job training programs or more on-the-job training opportunities. Employers feel that such programs would develop good work habits in graduates prior to permanent employment and provide opportunities for graduates to learn specific job skills.

Overall, the employer interview data show that employers are satisfied with MCPS graduates as employees. Thirty-eight percent of the employers said they were very satisfied with the graduates, 32 percent said they were satisfied, 16 percent said they were somewhat satisfied, and 5 percent said they were not satisfied. The employer interview data also show a positive picture concerning the future employment of MCPS special education graduates. Sixty-two percent of the employers stated that the graduate would be working at his/her company or organization a year from now. More than half of the employers said that there is room for the MCPS graduate to be promoted.

Postsecondary Training

Twenty-seven percent of the special education graduates reported that they are engaged in some type of postsecondary training. Twenty graduates from Mark Twain, Walter Johnson's Learning Center, and Gaithersburg's Learning Center are receiving postsecondary education at Montgomery College. These graduates reported that they were majoring in the following areas: Early Childhood Education, Computer Science and Technology, Dental Lab Technology, Engineering Technology, Liberal Arts and Science, General Education, Hospitality Management, Physical Education, and Medical Lab Technology.

Graduates from schools such as Longview and Rock Terrace are also receiving postsecondary education and training. More than half of the parents interviewed from Concord, Stephen Knolls, Rock Terrace, and Longview indicated that their child had received some type of postsecondary education and training since leaving MCPS. The training received by these graduates, however, is limited to a very few areas. Graduates from these schools are generally receiving training in job search skills, prevocational skills/training, food services, and fine motor skills. It is most apparent that in many situations graduates from such schools as Longview and Rock Terrace are receiving training that is quite similar to what was emphasized during their MCPS education. And in many situations, this training is really not skill or job training but training in life-coping skill areas such as using public transportation.

Graduates from schools such as Longview and Rock Terrace are receiving their postsecondary education and training from a variety of sources. The following training sources were named by parents: The Center for the Handicapped, Montgomery County Association of Retarded Citizens, Kennedy Institute, Montgomery County Vocational Training Center, Maryland Rehabilitation Center, Great Oaks, and private employers (such as the Bethesda Naval Medical Hospital).

Living Arrangements

It was possible through parent interviews to gather firsthand information on the current living arrangements of graduates from Concord, Longview, Stephens Knolls, Rock Terrace High School, the Bridge School, and the Auditory Program at Rockville High School. The interview data show that, with the exception of Longview graduates, special education graduates generally are living at home. Overall, nearly 80 percent of the parents interviewed said their child was currently living at home. The remaining students were either living in a group home (4 percent), away at college (6 percent), or living at Great Oaks (10 percent). Graduates from Mark Twain and the Learning Centers were not asked directly who they were living with; however, the overwhelming majority (80 percent) of these students interviewed were telephoned at their parents' residences (telephone numbers taken from the graduates' high school records).

Future Plans

Graduates were asked what they thought they would be doing a year from now. Overall, responses from parents and graduates were quite positive. The data show that:

- Forty-seven percent of the parents of graduates from Concord, Longview and Stephen Knolls think their child will be working, 32 percent will be waiting at home for either work or additional job training, 21 percent will be receiving additional job training, and 12 percent will be living in a group home (percentage can add to more than 100 percent since parents could give more than one response).

- Ninety-three percent of the parents of graduates from Rock Terrace think their child will be working a year from now, 14 percent will be obtaining additional job training, 14 percent will be waiting at home for work, and 7 percent will be living in a group home.

- Sixty-one percent of the Mark Twain graduates think they will attending school a year from now. Thirty-three percent of the Mark Twain graduates said they thought they would complete some type of program at a trade, technical or business school.

- Eighty-nine percent of the parents of graduates from the Auditory Program think their child will be in college next year, most attending the National Technical Institute for Deaf in Rochester.

- Sixty-two percent of the graduates from Gaithersburg said they thought they would be attending school in some kind of postsecondary institution next year, while 52 percent of the graduates from Walter Johnson said the same thing. A little more than a third of the graduates from the secondary learning centers said they thought they would at least earn an "AA degree."

Education Preparation

Parents of graduates from Rock Terrace, Longview, Concord, Stephen Knolls, Bridge School, the Orthopedic Program, and the Auditory Program were asked to comment on how well MCPS prepared their child in four specific areas: (1) preparation in the basic education skills, such as reading and math; (2) preparation in the basic life skills, such as cooking or taking public transportation; (3) preparation for employment; and (4) preparation for socializing and interacting with other people in public. Exhibit 5 summarizes parent responses to these four areas. The data show that:

- Overall, parents feel that MCPS best prepared their children for socializing and interacting with other people in public. Thirty-two percent of the parents surveyed said MCPS did this "very well," and 40 percent said that MCPS did this "well."

- Parents also feel good about the preparation their child received in the basic life skills. More than 40 percent of the parents surveyed said MCPS did this either "well" or "very well."

- The most negative reaction from parents comes in the area of how well MCPS prepares graduates for employment. Thirty-four percent of the parents surveyed said preparation for employment was either "poor" or "very poor." The fact that so many parents feel that employment preparation was inadequate shows up time and time again when analyzing the interview data. For example, 86 percent of the parents with graduates from Concord, Stephen Knolls, and Longview said that since graduation their child had not applied for work. The most frequently mentioned reasons why the graduate had not sought employment is that parents feel their children lack job skills and prior training experiences. It is important to note, however, that there are parents whose rating of job preparation was positive. Fifty-seven percent of the Rock Terrace parents said that preparation for employment was done either "well" or "very well."

- Many parents, across just about all programs, seem to be indifferent about their child's preparation in the basic education skills. Nearly one-third of the parents had no opinion about their child's preparation in this area. Some parents seem to feel that because of the graduate's limited mental capabilities and other handicaps it would be unfair to expect that these students could master the basic skills.

EXHIBIT 5

Parental Reaction to How Well MCPS Prepared Graduates

School	Preparation In: Basic Education Skills						Basic Life Skills						For Employment						Socializing & Interacting					
	Very Well	Well	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	NO*	Very Well	Well	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	NO	Very Well	Well	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	NO	Very Well	Well	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	NO
R Terrace**		38%	38%	19%	6%		38%	25%	19%	13%	6%		13%	44%	6%	19%	19%		13%	56%	25%	6%		
Longview	11	33		11		44	11	33		33		22			44	22		33	44	44	11			
Concord			67	33				33	33			33				33		67	67	33				
Knolls			17			83		33	17			50	17		17			67	17	30	17			17
Auditory	11	11	33	11	11	22		11				89		11	44	11	33		33	22	22	11		11
JFK Ortho		50		50								100			50		50		50			50		
Bridge	67					33	33	33		33						67	33		67	33				
TOTAL	8	23	25	15	4	25	17	25	10	13	2	33	6	17	23	19	17	19	31	42	17	6		4

*NO is "no opinion."

**Number of respondents for each school is: R Terrace, 16; Longview, 9; Concord, 3; Knolls, 6; Auditory, 9; JFK,2; Orthopedic, 2; and Bridge, 3.

Graduates from Mark Twain and the two secondary learning centers were asked to rate the adequacy of their MCPS education in ten different areas. Exhibit 6 reports the interview data for each of the ten areas by school. The data show that:

- Graduates are generally quite pleased with their preparation in basic education skills. A majority (7[illegible] percent) of the graduates either "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement, "My school adequately taught basic reading, writing, and math."

- Overall, graduates are of the opinion that preparation in the areas of job search skills and how to interview for a job were adequate. For example, 85 percent of the graduates from the Gaithersburg Learning Center either "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement, "My school adequately taught me how to interview for a job." Seventy percent of the graduates from Mark Twain and the Walter Johnson Learning Center either "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement, "My school adequately taught me job search skills."

- Most (69 percent) graduates "disagree" with the statement, "My school adequately taught me training for a specific job." This is probably a fair criticism by graduates. A review of 1983 graduates records reveals that only a very few students (less than half of any of the three graduating classes) from Mark Twain and the two secondary learning centers received some kind of specific job training such as auto mechanics (see Exhibit 7 for a list of job training opportunities received by special education graduates while attending MCPS high schools).

EXHIBIT 6

School Adequacy Rated by Mark Twain and Learning Center Graduates

Area Rated by Graduate	Percentage of Students Responding											
	Strongly Agree			Agree			Disagree			Strongly Disagree		
	TWAIN	WJSH	GSH*	TWAIN	WJSH	GSH	TWAIN	WJSH	GSH	TWAIN	WJSH	GSH
School adequately taught basic reading, writing and math	18	7	36	55	63	57	18	26	7	9	4	
School adequately taught technical information for work	3	8	15	33	24	46	49	60	39	15	8	
School adequately taught what to expect on the job	3	4	15	46	44	39	49	40	46	3	12	
School adequately taught the importance of attendance	21	12	23	64	42	46	15	39	23		8	8
School adequately taught how to work accurately	15	4	29	58	52	43	27	40	29		4	
School adequately taught safe working habits	18	8	14	58	31	50	24	58	36		4	
School adequately taught how to use tools and equipment			8	36	56	62	58	37	31	6	7	
School adequately taught how to interview for a job	6	4	14	52	58	71	39	35	14	3	4	
School adequately taught training for a specific job	6			21	30	36	73	67	64		4	
School adequately taught job search skills	9	4	29	61	65	57	24	27	14	6	4	

*TWAIN is Mark Twain, WJSH is Walter Johnson Senior High, and GSH is Gaithersburg Senior High. The number of respondents for each school is TWAIN, 33; WJSH, 27; and GSH, 16.

EXHIBIT 7

Type of Job Training Received by 1983 Education Graduates

	Percentage of Graduates Receiving Training									
Type of Training	Terrace	Longview	Concond	Knolls	Auditory	JFK-Ortho	Bridge	Twain	W. Johnson	G'thersbg
NO. OF '83 GRADUATES	22	10	4	4	11	6	3	50	42	23
Auto Body	18							2	2	
Auto Mechanics								10	26	
Carpentry									2	
Child Development										4
Clerk	5									
Computers						17				
Cosmetology								2		
Drawing & Design						17		4		
Fire Fighter									2	
Food Services	59	10	25					6		
Forestry								2		
Home Business								2		
Horticulture	5	10						2		
Maintenance	23	10	25							
Mechandising									2	
Plumbing								2	5	
Power Mechanics								4		
Prevocational	27	10		44				4	5	17
Typing						33				
Welding										9
Work Without Compensation*	64	50	50	56			33	68	26	9

*On-the-job training without pay.

NOTE: Percentages may add to more than 100 since some students received job training in more than one area.

Helpful Aspects and Aspects in Need of Improvement

Parents of graduates from Rock Terrace, Longview, Concord, Stephen Knolls, Bridge School, the Orthopedic Program, and the Auditory Program were asked to identify the aspects of their child's education that they thought were the most helpful and the most in need of improvement. In addition, graduates of Mark Twain, the Walter Johnson Learning Center, and the Gaithersburg Learning Center were asked to identify these same aspects. Exhibit 8 summarizes parent and graduate responses to this concern. The data show that:

- Parents think that the school's ability to teach socializing skills is the most helpful aspect of their child's education. More than one third of the parents interviewed mentioned this as a helpful aspect of their child's education. Parents also mentioned the school's curriculum and staff as helpful aspects.

- Parents would most like to see their child's school improve their job preparation programs. Twenty-two percent of the parents interviewed mentioned this aspect of their child's education as the thing most needing improvement. In addition, nearly 20 percent of the parents mentioned that MCPS should improve the school's academic offerings. For example, parents with children in the Auditory program feel their children should be challenged academically since most of them do go onto college. Presently, some of these parents feel that their children are not challenged enough.

- Graduates feel that their teachers were the most helpful aspect of their education. Overall, 41 percent of the graduates interviewed mentioned this aspect of their education as the most helpful. Graduates would most like to see MCPS improve discipline in the schools. A little more than 20 percent of the graduates interviewed mentioned that this aspect of their education needed improvement.

EXHIBIT 8

Aspects That Helped the Most and Aspects Most in Need of Improvement
As Identified by Parents & Graduates

	Percentage Mentioning Aspect By School									
Aspects That Were Helpful	R. Terr*	Longview	Concord	Knolls	Auditory	JFK-Ortho	Bridge	Twain	WJSH	GSH
Curriculum	42	8		10	25	50	50	9	13	22
Diagnosing students problems	8				13					
Extra help and attention given		8		10				22	13	11
Help for parents	8									
Helping students become independent	17	17								
Lincoln Center									10	
Medical help/intervention				10			50			
Opportunities for mainstreaming								3		
Peers/Friends										
Sign language communications		17			13					
Small classes					13			6	3	6
Staff	8	17		40				41	39	44
Teaching socializing skills	42	33	100	30	38					
Vocational training programs	17								3	
Aspects in Need of Improvement										
Ability to handle money		11		17						
Communication between school and home	7	22			25		33			
Curriculum/Academic challenge	20	11	33	17	25		17	20	24	7
Discipline	13							30	27	
Employment preparation	33	33	33		17		33			
Expections for students	7	11								
Limits on mainstreaming	20	11	11		8				3	14
Meeting individual needs	27			33	17					
Staff (more staff and resources)	7			17				5	17	14

Note: Percentages may add to more than 100 since respondents were allowed to give more than one response.

APPENDIX

MENTAL RETARDATION

Concord, Longview, and Stephen Knolls are the three schools that provide services to students from the age of 5 to 21 who have documented evidence of moderate to profound mental retardation. Students served by these schools tend to possess general intellectual functioning that is significantly below average, along with a lack of personal independence and social responsibility appropriate to their age. The main emphasis in this program is on developing communication, ability to carry out daily living activities, as much academic and vocational skill as possible, and socialization.

Students typically remain in the program until age 21, upon which time the majority remain living at home with their natural parents or remain in their present institution. Others enter a group home, are placed with foster parents, or enter another institution. Many students will never be able to function independently. After they leave MCPS, most of the students are referred to the Montgomery County Association for Retarded Citizens (MCARC), which operates a day program for the lower functioning students where they receive services like motor stimulation. These students usually remain in this program indefinitely. However, the waiting time is as much as a year after the students are accepted before they can enter the program.

Some of the students from the three schools qualify for an evaluation conducted by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). The evaluation takes approximately a month to complete and has a long waiting list. The result is a sheltered workshop where students are provided with training opportunities. There are a few jobs available in the sheltered workshop. Some of these students do obtain jobs outside DVR, but the majority remain there in what is called the "letter shop" where they can do repetitive work while sitting down.

For the higher functioning students who leave MCPS from one of these three schools, the choices are more optimistic. These students are able to get jobs where they earn salaries and pay taxes. They are able to do repetitive work and usually find jobs in the food services. A few work in the building services and some do clerical work.

MULTIPLE HANDICAPS

Some students have multiple handicaps which cause such severe educational problems that they cannot be accommodated in a special education program designed for any one of the impairments. The Rock Terrance High School serves students between the ages of 12 and 21 whose intelligence scores generally fall into the mildly retarded range and have documented evidence of multiple handicaps. Multiple handicaps may include such combinations as

mentally retarded/orthopedic, learning disability/emotional, and visual/speech. Deaf/blind are not included. Instruction focuses on functional reading, computation skills, and basic life services. Vocational training is provided, and there are sheltered workshops and on-the-job training opportunities. Training is provided in the following areas: industrial laundry, food services, and automative services.

Over half of these students are able to find or hold jobs. When they leave MCPS these students usually go on to Centers for the Handicapped or Montgomery County Association for the Retarded Vocational Centers (MCARC). Some students will remain at home when they leave MCPS.

EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENT

Three separate programs in MCPS address the needs of students who are emotionally impaired. Students who are documented as being emotionally impaired exhibit behavior which is not typical of a person's age group and which interferes with learning over a long period of time and to a marked degree. Distinctions are made in this paper between diagnoses of emotional disturbance, serious emotional disturbance, and severe emotional disturbance.

The Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents in Rockville (RICA/Rockville) combines an educational program (run by MCPS) with a day and residential treatment program (run by the Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene) for students with severe emotional disturbance. Montgomery County is only one of three counties supplying students to this program. The program provides a structured academic setting for evaluation, diagnosis, prescription, and instruction for students from 6 to 21 years. Students are mainstreamed into their regular school classes whenever possible and graduate when they have earned the required 20 Carnegie units. Most of the students are 18 or 19 when they leave the program. RICA/Rockville is only three years old and does not yet have a typical student; but some of the students enter a sheltered workshop environment when they leave MCPS, others have obtained jobs in varied fields, and some go to college.

The Bridge School serves students who range in age from 12 to 21 and are diagnosed with severe emotional disturbance. Also the emphasis is on academic growth, learning to control behavior, and social/emotional development. Before the construction of RICA, this school acted as the bridge between an institution or a restrictive program outside MCPS and the regular school. More than half of the students are typically mainstreamed for at least one and up to three classes a day. The remainder stay in one of the two self-contained classrooms housed in one high school (Einstein) and one junior high (Sligo). After graduation some of these students attend Montgomery College and others work. There is an in-school vocational program from which students receive some work training.

Finally, students diagnosed as seriously emotionally disturbed attend the Mark Twain School. The program at Mark Twain is designed to help students from 12 to 21 who can no longer be served in a regular school. The goal is to develop academic skills and to modify inappropriate behavior. The history of the Mark Twain School has been evolving for ten years now. The school was originally designed as a temporary placement for adolescents who had failed to learn in the normal school environment. The goal was to provide them with academic and interpersonal skills necessary for them to succeed in a normal school setting. An early entrance criterion was the anticipation that the student could make sufficient progress to be returned to the local school within two years. However, it became readily apparent that most of the students referred to the school had multiple problems. During 1972-73 and 1973-74, nearly 8 percent of the applicants were refused admission because of the student's need for a longer term placement. Current admission procedures require that these students be accepted into Mark Twain. In fact, some students now remain until they either graduate or leave MCPS at the age of majority. The military, technical schools, work, and college are all viable alternatives for Mark Twain students. Satellite programs are available for students in regular schools who demonstrate enough appropriate skill development to warrent such a placement.

HEARING IMPAIRED

The high school program for students with a hearing impairment is located within a regular high school (Rockville High School). These students have been identified as having a hearing loss which, whether correctable or permanent, affects their educational performance. The program includes those with some hearing loss and those who are deaf. Services include counseling, speech and language therapy, and teaching communication methods to parents.

Students in this program are mainstreamed into some classes. These regular classes at Rockville are sensitive to and prepared for their special needs. For example, sign language interpreters are available if desired. All of these students come together in a self-contained classroom for subjects like language and reading. Graduation for them is dependent upon earning the normal 20 carnegie units, which they typically do at the usual age. Some students enter the work force in varied fields. The program does not have a work component as part of its curriculum. The majority of the students in the past have gone on to college, generally attending the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, New York.

ORTHOPEDICALLY AND OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRED

The program for high school students with a physical handicap is housed in a regular high school (Kennedy High School) which has been modified for full access by the physically handicapped. Students in this program are orthopedically impaired or have other health impairments. Orthopedic impairments are described as severe physical, neuromuscular, or medically

restricting conditions that affect a student's educational performance. The term indicates congenital anomalies (clubfoot or absence of a limb), those resulting from disease (polio or bone tuberculosis), or other causes (cerebral palsy, amputations, or severe fractures or burns which cause contractions). Temporary or permanent special education and/or rehabiliation services may be required. Other health impairments include limited strength, vitality, or alertness resulting from chronic or acute problems, such as a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophiia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, or diabetes.

Students in this program are integrated into the regular school as much as their mobility allows; and they receive physical, occupational, and speech/language therapy, if needed. Some of these students are totally mainstreamed. There are cooperative work experience (CWE) opportunities, and some students in this program have internships where they work out in the field for at least part of the time. Graduation for students in this program means earning the necessary Carnegie units for the high school diploma. After leaving the program, some students attend colleges in Maryland, particulary Montgomery College; while others tend to go to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) for further training. However, the DVR has limited resources and cannot always help older students with such crippling diseases.

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY

A specific learning disability is indicated when there is a sharp discrepancy between a student's achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of the following areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skill, reading comprehension, and mathematical computation or reasoning. Secondary learning centers provide special assistance to students with a primary diagnosis of learning disability. They are housed in three regular senior high schools (Walter Johnson, Gaithersburg, and Kennedy High Schools). Students enrolled in these centers graduate from the host school when they have met the MCPS requirements for graduation, usually at the same time as their peers. The program is as individualized as possible, and most of the students are mainstreamed into regular classes in the host school for at least one period a day. Students can take advantage of the county's vocational trade program or a work study program developed especially for their needs. Approximately half of the students enter the work force after graduation, and the other half attend some form of postsecondary training.